

Meeting Notes

APHIS Web Steering Team Working Group: Migration of Web Content

Date: 17 June 2003

Subject: Notes From 17 June 2003 Teleconference

From: Kathleen Donelson-Westover

The APHIS Web Steering Team Working Group for the Migration of Web Content met by teleconference at 1:00 Eastern Time on 17 June 2003. The following items were discussed:

1) The Agency needs to develop and maintain an Agency-wide taxonomy to assist in the classification and searching of content by internal and external clients. This taxonomy will be assigned to all Agency content, regardless of its origin and targeted audience. Tina presented her work on the Agency taxonomy. She explained that the current taxonomy was developed from her web research and in conjunction with the National Agricultural Library (NAL). She also explained that more detailed work has been done with representatives from VS and PPQ.

Developing taxonomy is not an easy task. There can be disputes between business area specialists on such items as to where a term should be placed to the definition of a term. Tina explained that during her work with PPQ and VS when a dispute would arise, the group would often look at the user's point of view to clarify a term.

An inquiry was made if the taxonomy was developed for public content and not for inter-agency content. The response was that the taxonomy was for all content, regardless of its origination and target audience.

Camille stated that many official definitions can be found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Many terms, such as "pet" are defined, and may not be exactly what one would expect. For instance, many people would consider a "bird" to be an "animal" (see example below).

From CFR Title 9, Chapter 1, Part 1, Section 1.1 Definitions - ***Animal*** means any live or dead dog, cat, nonhuman primate, guinea pig, hamster, rabbit, or any other warmblooded animal, which is being used, or is intended for use for research, teaching, testing, experimentation, or exhibition purposes, or as a pet. This term excludes: Birds, rats of the genus *Rattus* and mice of the genus *Mus* bred for use in research, and horses not used for research purposes and other farm animals...

Currently, MRPBS and NWRC are developing a classification scheme for their content. These schemes could be easily integrated into the current Agency taxonomy. Tina will contact Dixie and Diana for their classification scheme.

An inquiry was made as to what some of the industry leaders are doing in the area of content management and information management.

The question, “Is it do-able?” was raised? The consensus was that creating an Agency wide taxonomy and using it to organize Agency content was do-able (but still a large task, so dividing the effort into achievable steps with realistic milestones would be key to success). But restructuring Agency content into one global hierarchical structure is very much needed and will be well worth the effort. An executive sponsor, and/or upper management buy-in is important to success of the endeavor.

An inquiry was made if the National Agricultural Library (NAL) Agriculture National Information Center (AgNIC) taxonomy could be used, instead of developing a totally new taxonomy. General consensus is that it would be optimal to leverage any existing indexing systems, data frameworks, and taxonomies under development or in use across the various APHIS business units.

2) The Agency should develop a standard list of metadata for each content type. All Agency content, regardless of its origin or target audience shall have all applicable metadata terms completed. Currently, metadata exists for four content types: documents, forms, news releases, and images. Tina went over the terms for the document content type. In the group’s experience, having a controlled vocabulary is the most efficient. For example, with a controlled vocabulary, the user cannot enter horses, pony, equine, or paard for the term “horse”. Therefore, each metadata term, where applicable will have a controlled vocabulary of terms that can be expanded and/or modified, by the appropriate personnel, when necessary.

Tina provided the metadata for each of the four content types to the group by e-mail. The group will review and discuss these metadata sets at the next teleconference.

3) A web tool will be developed to identify Agency personnel who have expertise in areas of interest. This is the beginning of a knowledge map for the Agency. The first use of this manifest will be in the development of an “intelligent” e-mail tool. On each web page, an information request option will be available. Users will be required to classify their information request using terms provided in a drop-down list. Once the information request is submitted, the designated point of contact for that subject area will receive (via email) the information request. An example of this process can be found on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website. On this form, the user must self-classify his or her request using a drop-down list. A similar form can be found at the US Portal Service website. In this case, the USPS provides broad categories of information group. Once the user clicks on a group, a form is available that lists sub-categories of information as a drop-down list within the general category. The URLs to the CDC and USPS information request forms can be found in the “Resources” section below.

Formatted: Fontcolor: Blue

Group members who have requirements were asked to submit these requirements to Nan Farnsworth. We will review the requirements at the next teleconference.

4) **The deliverables for this team will be a draft set of standards and specifications for the migration and maintenance for the Agency website.** It is expected that these drafts will be presented to the APHIS Integrated Planning (AIP) at their late July meeting. For examples of standards and specifications, please see “EPA Web Design” and “CDC User Interface Style Guide.” The URL for the site is given the “Resources” section below. Also, note that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also uses the EPA web design and content management standards.

Next Meeting

We will discuss the current use of Dreamweaver templates in the Agency. What is the group’s experience with them? Do we want to develop a set of templates that web developers can use? Do we want to mandate the use of these templates? How would we go about doing this?

I would like to encourage everyone to look at the EPA Web Design Guidelines listed in the “References” section below. Their guidelines might be a good example of where we would like to go as an Agency.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 24 June 2003 at 1:00 Eastern/12:00 Central/11:00 Mountain.

Resources

NAL Metadata Template <http://www.nal.usda.gov/cataloging/TEMPLATE2.pdf>

~~CDC General Information Page: <http://www.cdc.gov/3select.htm>~~

CDC Information Request Page: <http://www.cdc.gov/netinfo.htm>

US Portal Service Information Request Form: http://www.usps.com/common/contact_us/

EPA Web Design Guidelines <http://www.epa.gov/epafiles/index.htm>

CDC User Interface Style Guide <http://www.cdc.gov/od/hissb/docs/uigs.htm>

CDC Standards Approved by Internet Standards Committee:
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/hissb/docs/interstd.pdf>